

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 122BROADCASTING  
1 April 1985

# Editorials

## Casey at the bat

The discovery that William J. Casey, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, retains ownership of stock in Capital Cities Communications is unlikely to affect Capcities' acquisition of ABC, nor should it. Casey has been intimately associated with Capcities in the past as a member of its board and its counsel. He would have been foolish not to acquire stock in a company that he knew was destined to succeed.

It is, however, worth at least passing notice that Casey's CIA has a complaint against ABC pending at the FCC. Indeed the CIA has been dogged in its insistence that the FCC punish ABC for airing an unconfirmed report that the CIA tried to rig the assassination of a former partner. Rejected in its first attempt at FCC reprisal, the CIA filed a petition for reconsideration clearly signalling an intention to get the network one way or another. Could so unbending and determined an assault be the work of Casey's underlings?

What is the CIA to do about its complaint now that the hated ABC is in prospect of falling into Casey's portfolio? Interesting question. The CIA cannot withdraw its complaint without suggesting that the director's passions can be cooled by fiscal opportunity. It can, however, accept the FCC's second rejection, which is generally predicted, and that would be too bad. As noted here before, a CIA appeal from an adverse FCC decision just might give the courts a chance to correct themselves on the broadcasters' First Amendment rights. Surely no court that had read the Constitution would abide as direct a governmental attack on the editorial process as the CIA has attempted.

Maybe Tom Murphy's business acumen has innocently deprived the Fifth Estate of a court case with a happy ending.